

## Interpretive Response Papers (IRP's)

**1. What is an IRP?** IRP's are homework assignments. They should be typed (double-spaced & 12 point font), but I do not expect them to be polished/revised like full-scale essays. I mostly ignore typos, spelling errors and the finer points of style when marking IRP's, so focus on the content.

**2. Why doesn't Cliff accept late turn-ins of IRP's?** I.R.P.s are **always** due at the beginning of the hour—no exceptions. The purpose of the IRP's is to a) provide an incentive for you to actually read the assigned works and b) to encourage you to put some thought into the core questions or problems that we'll be focusing on that day. For both of these purposes, it's essential that you have the IRP completed by the beginning of class. I don't accept late turn-ins for IRP's, but you can compensate for the minus (-) by earning a plus (+) on an ensuing IRP (see below). You can always email in the assignment to meet the deadline, but I still need the printout for your homework folder, so bring in a hard copy as soon as possible.

**3. How does Cliff grade them?** Like all homework, IRP's receive a check (✓), plus (+) or minus (-), rather than a letter grade. To get a 'check'(✓), students must demonstrate that they did indeed read the assigned text(s) and that they answered the questions clearly and completely.

*Prove to me that you really read the entire assigned reading!*

To get a 'plus' (+) students must clearly demonstrate that they have gone 'above and beyond the call of duty' in terms of quality and/or quantity. I often provide optional "bonus questions" for students who want to try for the 'plus,' but simply responding to the bonus question isn't 100% guarantee of the + mark—the overall quality still has to be very high. By "high quality" I mean especially precise or specific in details (examples, quotations, etc.) and/or particularly complex or insightful in analysis.

**4. Do we get our IRP's back?** In a word—no. Unlike essays, I do not mark up, comment on, or otherwise give detailed feedback on homework. I simply mark them ✓, +, or - and then file them in your homework folder. You can check your homework marks at any time by asking to see your folder. I encourage (but do not require) students to make two copies of each IRP—one for me and one for your own reference.

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**IRP #1:** Read "A Modest Proposal" by Jonathan Swift (attached handout)

IMPORTANT: Please do not do any research on Swift or this essay.

1. Based only on the essay itself, what is your impression of the author, Jonathan Swift? Please explain your answer with references to the reading.

2. What do you suppose was Swift's purpose or intention for publishing this essay (in Dublin, Ireland in the year 1729)?

3. Optional bonus question: Compose a clear, accurate modern English paraphrase of one (or more) of Swift's paragraphs.

**A MODEST PROPOSAL: For preventing the children of poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the publick. By Dr. Jonathan Swift (1729 )**

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It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town<sup>1</sup>, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.<sup>2</sup>

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years, upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk, for a solar year, with little other nourishment: at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the cloathing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expence than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom) but this being

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<sup>1</sup> Dublin, Ireland

<sup>2</sup> Many young Irishmen left their country to fight as mercenaries in Spain's civil war or to work as indentured servants in the West Indies.

granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old; except where they are of towardly parts<sup>3</sup>, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers: As I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriments and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasee, or a ragout

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, increaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

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<sup>3</sup> Precocious

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolific dyet, there are more children born in Roman Catholick countries about nine months after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists<sup>4</sup> among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flea the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, shambles<sup>5</sup> may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supply'd by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service: And these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon would become breeders themselves: And besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Salmanaazor,<sup>6</sup> a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above

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<sup>4</sup> "Papists" = Roman Catholics. Anti-Catholic attitudes were widespread in Protestant England.

<sup>5</sup> A slaughterhouse

<sup>6</sup> Frenchman who passed himself off as a native of Formosa

twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty; and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair,<sup>7</sup> and appear at a play-house and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for; the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to a distress,<sup>8</sup> and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintainance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby encreased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

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<sup>7</sup> A sedan chair; that is, a portable, covered chair designed to seat one person and then to be carried by two men.

<sup>8</sup> Property could be seized by creditors.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts<sup>9</sup> for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expence. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sow when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrel'd beef: the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearly child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and 'twas indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither cloaths, nor household furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance: Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at

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<sup>9</sup> Recipes.

least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shop-keepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, 'till he hath at least some glimpse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice.

But, as to my self, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expence and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, and flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, As things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, There being a round million of creatures in humane figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes, as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor cloaths to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of intailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

**IRP #2 [due Wed. 1/17]:** Read the poem “Ariel” (below)

IMPORTANT: Please **do not** do any research on this poem or author. Use of a dictionary is encouraged.

1. Most readers find this a difficult poem to read & understand—what, specifically, makes it so hard?
  2. Propose, explain and defend a theory about what this poem *means*. Even if you’re mystified, do your best. It’s perfectly fine to use qualifiers such as “might,” “could,” “possibly,” “seems,” and so on.
  3. Optional bonus question: Compose a clear, accurate modern English paraphrase of the entire poem.
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**Ariel**

Stasis in darkness.  
Then the substanceless blue  
Pour of tor and distances.

God’s lioness,  
How one we grow,  
Pivot of heels and knees!—The furrow

Splits and passes, sister to  
The brown arc  
Of the neck I cannot catch,

Nigger-eye  
Berries cast dark  
Hooks—

Black sweet blood mouthfuls,  
Shadows.  
Something else

Hauls me through air—  
Thighs, hair;  
Flakes from my heels.

White  
Godiva, I unpeel—  
Dead hands, dead stringencies.

And now I  
Foam to wheat, a glitter of seas.  
The child’s cry

Melts in the wall.  
And I  
Am the arrow,

The dew that flies  
Suicidal, at one with the drive  
Into the red

Eye, the cauldron of morning.



**102 IRP#3** Flannery O'Connor: A Writer in Depth [Ch. 10] Due Mon. 1/22/18  
Read "A Good Man is Hard to Find" and "Revelation" (403-413/414-427).

1. Many writers have such distinctive styles, favorite themes, etc. that a reader can often tell who the author is just by reading a few pages of their work. O'Connor is one of those authors. Identify specifically what you see as her signature style, point of view, etc.
2. What do you guess might be the intended message or meaning that Flannery O'Connor was trying to communicate in these two stories? Why do you suppose she wrote them?
3. Optional bonus question. **After having written your responses to '1' & '2' above**, read the third O'Connor story, "Parker's Back." Would you change or modify your answers now, or were your initial ideas merely confirmed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> story? Please explain in detail.

**102 IRP#4** Sylvia Plath poems. Due Wed. 1/24/18

Read "Daddy," "Lady Lazarus," and "Metaphors" (pp. 1074, 882, 737)

1. **Without looking up any material on Sylvia Plath**, write a description of the poet who wrote these three poems, plus "Ariel" (from IRP #2), based only on the impression of the author that you get from reading these works.
2. Optional bonus question. After writing your responses to '1' above, read 3 more Plath poems (many of her works are available free online) and describe how these additional works influenced your portrait of Sylvia Plath. [Recommended poems: "The Colossus," "Black Rook in Rainy Weather," "Tulips."]

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### 102 IRP#5 Emily Dickinson: Before and After

1. BEFORE: Read the poem “Wild Nights!” (951) and write 2 paragraphs explaining a) the meaning of the poem and b) your impressions of the author. [Do not read any other information on Emily Dickinson at this point.]
2. AFTER: After reading the biographical sketch of Emily Dickinson in our text (950), write a paragraph explaining how your interpretation of “Wild Nights!” and its author was affected by what you learned from this information about the author.
3. Optional bonus question: Read the entire “Emily Dickinson” section in your book (950-964), including what Dickinson herself has to say about her life and art and the views of several literary critics. Again, ask yourself the question “What do I think of ‘Wild Nights’ *now*?” In other words, how has this additional information affected both your original (‘1’ above) and modified (‘2’ above) takes on the poem?

### 102 IRP#6 Chapter 32—Critical Casebook: Langston Hughes

1. Read “Harlem” [also known by the title “Dream Deferred”] (970) **before** you read any of Hughes’ other poems or his bio. Write a 1 paragraph interpretation/commentary on the poem.
2. Now read the full section on Langston Hughes (965-982), including all the poems and commentaries. Write a second paragraph in which you explain how your understanding of “Harlem/Dream Deferred” is changed by what you’ve learned.

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1. In the mid-Twentieth Century, James Thurber was a well-known writer, famous for his humorous stories, such as "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" and "The Unicorn in the Garden," and his cartoons:



Does his work remain successfully comical to readers in 2018? Explain why/why not.

2. The author meant for this story to be funny—but some readers today don't see it that way. What might a feminist\* reader say about the way the story portrays women, especially women who dare to exercise power in the "male" world? [\*Look this word up in the dictionary!]

### **The Catbird Seat<sup>1</sup>** by James Thurber

Mr. Martin bought the pack of Camels on Monday night in the most crowded cigar store on Broadway. It was theatre time and seven or eight men were buying cigarettes. The clerk didn't even glance at Mr. Martin, who put the pack in his overcoat pocket and went out. If any of the staff at F & S had seen him buy the cigarettes, they would have been astonished, for it was generally known that Mr. Martin did not smoke, and never had. No one saw him.

It was just a week to the day since Mr. Martin had decided to rub out Mrs. Ulgine Barrows. The term "rub out" pleased him because it suggested nothing more than the correction of an error—in this case an error of Mr. Fitweiler. Mr. Martin had spent each night of the past week working out his plan and examining it. As he walked home now he went over it again. For the hundredth time he resented the element of imprecision, the margin of guesswork that entered into the business. The project as he had worked it out was casual and bold, the risks were considerable. Something might go wrong anywhere along the line. And therein lay the cunning of his scheme. No one would ever see in it the cautious, painstaking hand of Erwin Martin, head of the filing department at F & S, of whom Mr. Fitweiler had once said, "Man is fallible but Martin isn't." No one would see his hand, that is, unless it were caught in the act.

Sitting in his apartment, drinking a glass of milk, Mr. Martin reviewed his case against Mrs. Ulgine Barrows, as he had every night for seven nights. He began at the beginning. Her quacking voice and braying laugh had first profaned the halls of F & S on March 7, 1941 (Mr. Martin had

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<sup>1</sup> Originally published in *The New Yorker*, Nov. 14, 1942

a head for dates). Old Roberts, the personnel chief, had introduced her as the newly appointed special adviser to the president of the firm, Mr. Fitweiler. The woman had appalled Mr. Martin instantly, but he hadn't shown it. He had given her his dry hand, a look of studious concentration, and a faint smile. "Well," she had said, looking at the papers on his desk, "are you lifting the oxcart out of the ditch?" As Mr. Martin recalled that moment, over his milk, he squirmed slightly. He must keep his mind on her crimes as a special adviser, not on her peccadillos as a personality. This he found difficult to do, in spite of entering an objection and sustaining it. The faults of the woman as a woman kept chattering on in his mind like an unruly witness. She had, for almost two years now, baited him. In the halls, in the elevator, even in his own office, into which she romped now and then like a circus horse, she was constantly shouting these silly questions at him. "Are you lifting the oxcart out of the ditch? Are you tearing up the pea patch? Are you hollering down the rain barrel? Are you scraping around the bottom of the pickle barrel? Are you sitting in the catbird seat?"

It was Joey Hart, one of Mr. Martin's two assistants, who had explained what the gibberish meant. "She must be a Dodger fan," he had said. "Red Barber announces the Dodger games over the radio and he uses those expressions—picked 'em up down South." Joey had gone on to explain one or two. "Tearing up the pea patch" meant going on a rampage; "sitting in the catbird seat" means sitting pretty, like a batter with three balls and no strikes on him. Mr. Martin dismissed all this with an effort. It had been annoying, it had driven him near to distraction, but he was too solid a man to be moved to murder by anything so childish. It was fortunate, he reflected as he passed on to the important charges against Mrs. Barrows, that he had stood up under it so well. He had maintained always an outward appearance of polite tolerance. "Why, I even believe you like the woman," Miss Paired, his other assistant, had once said to him. He had simply smiled.

A gavel rapped in Mr. Martin's mind and the case proper was resumed. Mrs. Ulgine Barrows stood charged with willful, blatant, and persistent attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was competent, material, and relevant to review her advent and rise to power. Mr. Martin had got the story from Miss Paired, who seemed always able to find things out. According to her, Mrs. Barrows had met Mr. Fitweiler at a party, where she had rescued him from the embraces of a powerfully built drunken man who had mistaken the president of F & S for a famous retired Middle Western football coach. She had led him to a sofa and somehow worked upon him a monstrous magic. The aging gentleman had jumped to the conclusion there and then that this was a woman of singular attainments, equipped to bring out the best in him and in the firm. A week later he had introduced her into F & S as his special adviser. On that day confusion got its foot in the door. After Miss Tyson, Mr. Brundage, and Mr. Bartlett had been fired and Mr. Munson had taken his hat and stalked out, mailing in his resignation later, old Roberts had been emboldened to speak to Mr. Fitweiler. He mentioned that Mr. Munson's department had been "a little disrupted" and hadn't they perhaps better resume the old system there? Mr. Fitweiler had said certainly not. He had the greatest faith in Mrs. Barrows' ideas. "They require a little seasoning, a little seasoning, is all," he had added. Mr. Roberts had given it up. Mr. Martin reviewed in detail all the changes wrought by Mrs. Barrows. She had begun chipping at the cornices of the firm's edifice and now she was swinging at the foundation stones with a pickaxe.

Mr. Martin came now, in his summing up, to the afternoon of Monday, November 2, 1942—just one week ago. On that day, at 3 P. M., Mrs. Barrows had bounced into his office. “Boo!” she had yelled. “Are you scraping around the bottom of the pickle barrel?” Mr. Martin had looked at her from under his green eyeshade, saying nothing. She had begun to wander about the office, taking it in with her great, popping eyes. “Do you really need all these filing cabinets?” she had demanded suddenly. Mr. Martin’s heart had jumped. “Each of these files,” he had said, keeping his voice even, “plays an indispensable part in the system of F & S.” She had brayed at him, “Well, don’t tear up the pea patch!” and gone to the door. From there she had bawled, “But you sure have got a lot of fine scrap in here!” Mr. Martin could no longer doubt that the finger was on his beloved department. Her pickaxe was on the upswing, poised for the first blow. It had not come yet; he had received no blue memo from the enchanted Mr. Fitweiler bearing nonsensical instructions deriving from the obscene woman. But there was no doubt in Mr. Martin’s mind that one would be forthcoming. He must act quickly. Already a precious week had gone by. Mr. Martin stood up in his living room, still holding his milk glass. “Gentlemen of the jury,” he said to himself, “I demand the death penalty for this horrible person.”

The next day Mr. Martin followed his routine, as usual. He polished his glasses more often and once sharpened an already sharp pencil, but not even Miss Paired noticed. Only once did he catch sight of his victim; she swept past him in the hall with a patronizing “Hi!” At five-thirty he walked home, as usual, and had a glass of milk, as usual. He had never drunk anything stronger in his life—unless you could count ginger ale. The late Sam Schlosser, the S of F & S, had praised Mr. Martin at a staff meeting several years before for his temperate habits. “Our most efficient worker neither drinks nor smokes,” he had said. “The results speak for themselves.” Mr. Fitweiler had sat by, nodding approval.

Mr. Martin was still thinking about that red-letter day as he walked over to the Schrafft’s on Fifth Avenue near Forty-sixth Street. He got there, as he always did, at eight o’clock. He finished his dinner and the financial page of the Sun at a quarter to nine, as he always did. It was his custom after dinner to take a walk. This time he walked down Fifth Avenue at a casual pace. His gloved hands felt moist and warm, his forehead cold. He transferred the Camels from his overcoat to a jacket pocket.

He wondered, as he did so, if they did not represent an unnecessary note of strain. Mrs. Barrows smoked only Luckies. It was his idea to puff a few puffs on a Camel (after the rubbing-out), stub it out in the ashtray holding her lipstick-stained Luckies, and thus drag a small red herring across the trail. Perhaps it was not a good idea. It would take time. He might even choke, too loudly.

Mr. Martin had never seen the house on West Twelfth Street where Mrs. Barrows lived, but he had a clear enough picture of it. Fortunately, she had bragged to everybody about her ducky first-floor apartment in the perfectly darling three-story red-brick. There would be no doorman or other attendants; just the tenants of the second and third floors. As he walked along, Mr. Martin realized that he would get there before nine-thirty. He had considered walking north on Fifth Avenue from Schrafft’s to a point from which it would take him until ten o’clock to reach the house. At that hour people were less likely to be coming in or going out. But the procedure would have made an awkward loop in the straight thread of his casualness and he had abandoned it. It was impossible to figure when people would be entering or leaving the house, anyway. There was a great risk at any hour. If he ran into anybody, he would simply have to place the

rubbing-out of Ulgine Barrows in the inactive file forever. The same thing would hold true if there were someone in her apartment. In that case he would just say that he had been passing by, recognized her charming house, and thought to drop in.

It was eighteen minutes after nine when Mr. Martin turned into Twelfth Street. A man passed him, and a man and a woman, talking. There was no one within fifty paces when he came to the house, halfway down the block. He was up the steps and in the small vestibule in no time, pressing the bell under the card that said "Mrs. Ulgine Barrows." When the clicking in the lock started, he jumped forward against the door. He got inside fast, closing the door behind him. A bulb in a lantern hung from the hall ceiling on a chain seemed to give a monstrously bright light. There was nobody on the stair, which went up ahead of him along the left wall. A door opened down the hall in the wall on the right. He went toward it swiftly, on tiptoe.

"Well, for God's sake, look who's here!" bawled Mrs. Barrows, and her braying laugh rang out like the report of a shotgun. He rushed past her like a football tackle, bumping her." Hey, quit shoving!" she said, closing the door behind them. They were in her living room, which seemed to Mr. Martin to be lighted by a hundred lamps. "What's after you?" she said. "You're as jumpy as a goat." He found he was unable to speak. His heart was wheezing in his throat. "I—yes," he finally brought out. She was jabbering and laughing as she started to help him off with his coat. "No, no," he said. "I'll put it here." He took it off and put it on a chair near the door. "Your hat and gloves, too," she said. "You're in a lady's house." He put his hat on top of the coat. Mrs. Barrows seemed larger than he had thought. He kept his gloves on. "I was passing by," he said. "I recognized—is there anyone here?" She laughed louder than ever. "No," she said, "we're all alone. You're as white as a sheet, you funny man. Whatever has come over you? I'll mix you a toddy." She started toward a door across the room. "Scotch-and-soda be all right? But say, you don't drink, do you?" She turned and gave him her amused look. Mr. Martin pulled himself together. "Scotch-and-soda will be all right," he heard himself say. He could hear her laughing in the kitchen.

Mr. Martin looked quickly around the living room for the weapon. He had counted on finding one there. There were andirons and a poker and something in a corner that looked like an Indian club. None of them would do. It couldn't be that way. He began to pace around. He came to a desk. On it lay a metal paper knife with an ornate handle. Would it be sharp enough? He reached for it and knocked over a small brass jar. Stamps spilled out of it and it fell to the floor with a clatter. "Hey," Mrs. Barrows yelled from the kitchen, "are you tearing up the pea patch?" Mr. Martin gave a strange laugh. Picking up the knife, he tried its point against his left wrist. It was blunt. It wouldn't do.

When Mrs. Barrows reappeared, carrying two highballs, Mr. Martin, standing there with his gloves on, became acutely conscious of the fantasy he had wrought. Cigarettes in his pocket, a drink prepared for him—it was all too grossly improbable. It was more than that; it was impossible. Somewhere in the back of his mind a vague idea stirred, sprouted. "For heaven's sake, take off those gloves," said Mrs. Barrows. "I always wear them in the house," said Mr. Martin. The idea began to bloom, strange and wonderful. She put the glasses on a coffee table in front of the sofa and sat on the sofa. "Come over here, you odd little man," she said. Mr. Martin went over and sat beside her. It was difficult getting a cigarette out of the pack of Camels, but he

managed it. She held a match for him, laughing. "Well," she said, handing him his drink, "this is perfectly marvellous. You with a drink and a cigarette."

Mr. Martin puffed, not too awkwardly, and took a gulp of the highball. "I drink and smoke all the time," he said. He clinked his glass against hers. "Here's nuts to that old windbag, Fitweiler," he said, and gulped again. The stuff tasted awful, but he made no grimace. "Really, Mr. Martin," she said, her voice and posture changing, "you are insulting our employer." Mrs. Barrows was now all special adviser to the president. "I am preparing a bomb," said Mr. Martin, "which will blow the old goat higher than hell." He had only had a little of the drink, which was not strong. It couldn't be that. "Do you take dope or something?" Mrs. Barrows asked coldly. "Heroin," said Mr. Martin. "I'll be coked to the gills when I bump that old buzzard off." "Mr. Martin!" she shouted, getting to her feet. "That will be all of that. You must go at once." Mr. Martin took another swallow of his drink. He tapped his cigarette out in the ashtray and put the pack of Camels on the coffee table. Then he got up. She stood glaring at him. He walked over and put on his hat and coat. "Not a word about this," he said, and laid an index finger against his lips. All Mrs. Barrows could bring out was "Really!" Mr. Martin put his hand on the doorknob. "I'm sitting in the catbird seat," he said. He stuck his tongue out at her and left. Nobody saw him go.

Mr. Martin got to his apartment, walking, well before eleven. No one saw him go in. He had two glasses of milk after brushing his teeth, and he felt elated. It wasn't tipsiness, because he hadn't been tipsy. Anyway, the walk had worn off all effects of the whiskey. He got in bed and read a magazine for a while. He was asleep before midnight.

Mr. Martin got to the office at eight-thirty the next morning, as usual. At a quarter to nine, Ulgine Barrows, who had never before arrived at work before ten, swept into his office. "I'm reporting to Mr. Fitweiler now!" she shouted. "If he turns you over to the police, it's no more than you deserve!" Mr. Martin gave her a look of shocked surprise. "I beg your pardon?" he said. Mrs. Barrows snorted and bounced out of the room, leaving Miss Paired and Joey Hart staring after her. "What's the matter with that old devil now?" asked Miss Paired. "I have no idea," said Mr. Martin, resuming his work. The other two looked at him and then at each other. Miss Paired got up and went out. She walked slowly past the closed door of Mr. Fitweiler's office. Mrs. Barrows was yelling inside, but she was not braying. Miss Paired could not hear what the woman was saying. She went back to her desk.

Forty-five minutes later, Mrs. Barrows left the president's office and went into her own, shutting the door. It wasn't until half an hour later that Mr. Fitweiler sent for Mr. Martin. The head of the filing department, neat, quiet, attentive, stood in front of the old man's desk. Mr. Fitweiler was pa

le and nervous. He took his glasses off and twiddled them. He made a small, bruffing sound in his throat. "Martin," he said, "you have been with us more than twenty years." "Twenty-two, sir," said Mr. Martin. "In that time," pursued the president, "your work and your—uh—manner have been exemplary." "I trust so, sir," said Mr. Martin. "I have understood, Martin," said Mr. Fitweiler, "that you have never taken a drink or smoked." "That is correct, sir," said Mr. Martin. "Ah, yes." Mr. Fitweiler polished his glasses. "You may describe what you did after leaving the office yesterday, Martin," he said. Mr. Martin allowed less than a second for his bewildered pause. "Certainly, sir," he said. "I walked home. Then I went to Schrafft's for dinner. Afterward

I walked home again. I went to bed early, sir, and read a magazine for a while. I was asleep before eleven.” “Ah, yes,” said Mr. Fitweiler again. He was silent for a moment, searching for the proper words to say to the head of the filing department. “Mrs. Barrows,” he said finally, “Mrs. Barrows has worked hard, Martin, very hard. It grieves me to report that she has suffered a severe breakdown. It has taken the form of a persecution complex accompanied by distressing hallucinations.” “I am very sorry, sir,” said Mr. Martin. “Mrs. Barrows is under the delusion,” continued Mr. Fitweiler, “that you visited her last evening and behaved yourself in an—uh—unseemly manner.” He raised his hand to silence Mr. Martin’s little pained outcry. “It is the nature of these psychological diseases,” Mr. Fitweiler said, “to fix upon the least likely and most innocent party as the—uh—source of persecution. These matters are not for the lay mind to grasp, Martin. I’ve just have my psychiatrist, Dr. Fitch, on the phone. He would not, of course, commit himself, but he made enough generalizations to substantiate my suspicions. I suggested to Mrs. Barrows, when she had completed her—uh—story to me this morning, that she visit Dr. Fitch, for I suspected a condition at once. She flew, I regret to say, into a rage, and demanded—uh—requested that I call you on the carpet. You may not know, Martin, but Mrs. Barrows had planned a reorganization of your department—subject to my approval, of course, subject to my approval. This brought you, rather than anyone else, to her mind—but again that is a phenomenon for Dr. Fitch and not for us. So, Martin, I am afraid Mrs. Barrows’ usefulness here is at an end.” “I am dreadfully sorry, sir,” said Mr. Martin.

It was at this point that the door to the office blew open with the suddenness of a gas-main explosion and Mrs. Barrows catapulted through it. “Is the little rat denying it?” she screamed. “He can’t get away with that!” Mr. Martin got up and moved discreetly to a point beside Mr. Fitweiler’s chair. “You drank and smoked at my apartment,” she bawled at Mr. Martin, “and you know it! You called Mr. Fitweiler an old windbag and said you were going to blow him up when you got coked to the gills on your heroin!” She stopped yelling to catch her breath and a new glint came into her popping eyes. “If you weren’t such a drab, ordinary little man,” she said, “I’d think you’d planned it all. Sticking your tongue out, saying you were sitting in the catbird seat, because you thought no one would believe me when I told it! My God, it’s really too perfect!” She brayed loudly and hysterically, and the fury was on her again. She glared at Mr. Fitweiler. “Can’t you see how he has tricked us, you old fool? Can’t you see his little game?” But Mr. Fitweiler had been surreptitiously pressing all the buttons under the top of his desk and employees of F & S began pouring into the room. “Stockton,” said Mr. Fitweiler, “you and Fishbein will take Mrs. Barrows to her home. Mrs. Powell, you will go with them.” Stockton, who had played a little football in high school, blocked Mrs. Barrows as she made for Mr. Martin. It took him and Fishbein together to force her out of the door into the hall, crowded with stenographers and office boys. She was still screaming imprecations at Mr. Martin, tangled and contradictory imprecations. The hubbub finally died out down in the corridor.

“I regret that this happened,” said Mr. Fitweiler. “I shall ask you to dismiss it from your mind, Martin.” “Yes, sir,” said Mr. Martin, anticipating his chief’s “That will be all” by moving to the door. “I will dismiss it.” He went out and shut the door, and his step was light and quick in the hall. When he entered his department he had slowed down to his customary gait, and he walked quietly across the room to the W20 file, wearing a look of studious concentration.



**102 IRP#8** Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" (486-491)

1. This story is partly about a culture-clash: a daughter returns to her family, still living in its traditional way, but she has picked up a new set of cultural values. Describe some of the ways in which this clash of cultures puts these characters at odds with each other.
2. Walker's story is concerned with race (in a sense, about two different ways of "being Black"), but perhaps socio-economic class is really more important to the story. What does the conflict over certain objects being put to 'everyday use' have to do with class in this story?
3. Optional bonus question: View the short film version of "Everyday Use" [if you Google film + "Everyday Use" it will show as a 25 minute Youtube video. Write a 1-paragraph evaluation of the film's success or failure at being a faithful adaptation of the story.

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**102 IRP #9** “The Story of an Hour” (547) and “The Storm” (120) by Kate Chopin.

1. What specifics in these two stories indicate cultural differences between our own contemporary society and the societies of a century ago portrayed in the stories?
2. Explain how socio-economic class affects the characters in these two pieces. In other words, why does their class matter in the story?
3. Imagine a very devout religious person reading “The Story of an Hour” and “The Storm”: what might be their primary reactions to the stories? Why?
4. Optional bonus question: Read a third story by Chopin, “Désirée’s Baby,” that is not included in our book [<http://www.pbs.org/katechopin/library/desireesbaby.html>]. Explain how this story shows that race/racism in America was not (and still is not) a simple matter of Black and White.

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**IRP #10** read *Antigone* by Sophocles (1203-1234). Read along as you view the film version available on SC4’s Films on Demand database or using youtube, as shown in class.

1. Describe some of the challenges that modern readers (like you) face when trying to read and understand a work of drama like this one. Which difficulties arise from the fact that this is a work written 2500 years ago in a foreign land? Which difficulties for the reader have to do instead with the fact that this is the script of a play, and so was not intended to be read but rather performed for an audience?
2. *Antigone* is at heart a play about an act of civil disobedience (see below). Do you find Antigone’s disobedience to be justified? Why/why not? Identify at least one specific well-known act of civil disobedience from modern times (20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century) and compare it with Antigone’s defiance of her king (and the head of her family).

**civil disobedience** 1. the refusal to obey certain laws or governmental demands for the purpose of influencing legislation or government policy, characterized by the employment of such nonviolent techniques as boycotting, picketing, and nonpayment of taxes. 2. The refusal to obey a law out of a belief that the law is morally wrong. 3. an essay (1848) by Thoreau. **Note** : In the nineteenth century, the American author Henry David Thoreau wrote “Civil Disobedience,” an important essay justifying such action. **Note** : In the twentieth century, civil disobedience was exercised by Mahatma Gandhi in the struggle for independence in India. Civil disobedience, sometimes called nonviolent resistance or passive resistance, was also practiced by some members of the civil rights movement in the United States, notably Martin Luther King, Jr., to challenge segregation of public facilities; a common tactic of these civil rights supporters was the sit-in. King defended the use of civil disobedience in his “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

## Research Process—Stage One: The Working Bibliography [due: Mon. 3/17/18]

Turn in a “Working Bibliography” listing books, articles, etc. that you might use for your ENG 102 research paper. *This is just an exercise: you are not committed to these works.*

Your working bib will resemble the **sample Works Cited Page Following MLA Style** on page 456 of your handbook. Alphabetize entries, use hanging indentation, and ensure that each item follows the *exact format* shown in section **70c**. Websites ‘Knightcite’ & ‘Easybib’ make this job much easier, but you need to check for accuracy in content and format.

IMPORTANT: Follow the following rules to the letter!

- 1) Minimum number of sources in the working bibliography = eight (8)
- 2) Minimum number of **types** of sources = five (5)<sup>1</sup>

\*The point of ‘2’ is that you can’t base your paper merely on 8 websites or 8 newspaper articles—you must demonstrate your ability to make use of a range of source types.

- 3) Follow each entry with an “about the author(s)” commentary [see example on reverse].

If anonymous, tell about the organization (publisher, agency, etc.) that publishes or takes credit for the work. *You may not use a work that cannot be traced to a specific author or some entity that claims it as its own (no Wikipedia!).*

\*The point of ‘3’ is to establish the level of **credibility** of the source.

- 4) **Include** at least one encyclopedia article. This may come from a general reference encyclopedia, such as *Britannica*, or a specialty encyclopedia, but **do not use Wikipedia!**

- 5) **Include** at least one article from a newspaper. *The New York Times* is the preferred source.

The New York Times Historical Database, available through the Library, gives us access to articles back as far as 1851.

- 6) **Include** at least one article from a journal or magazine.

- 7) You are encouraged, but not required, to include at least one person who has knowledge of your subject (use ‘Interview’ pg.446)

- 8) **Staple** to the back of the working bibliography:

- a. a printout (1 pg.) from a **worldcat** search listing books on your subject
- b. a printout (1 pg.) listing works on your subject found via one of the internet search tools covered in the Library orientation but **not** from a standard web search engine

\*The point of ‘8’ is to a) show that you know how to find books on your subject that can be accessed via **Interlibrary Loan** and b) show that you can do more than just Google it.

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<sup>1</sup> Types of sources: pp. 412-13 “EXAMPLES OF MLA WORKS-CITED” lists 10 different **types** of sources (i.e. “Books and Parts of Books,” “Government Publications,” etc.) I will allow **Books** to count as 2 different types, if you use different sorts of books: monographs, anthologies, and collections (such as collected letters or interviews) each count as a different type of source for the purposes of this requirement.

## Research Process—Stage One: The Working Bibliography [due: Mon. 3/17/18]

### Two Examples of Working Bibliography Entries:

Fish, Stanley. "An Eskimo 'A Rose for Emily.'" *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*. Ed. X. J. Kennedy & Dana Gioia. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2010. 2203-4. Print.

Stanley Fish is an internationally famous professor and scholar, the author of countless books and articles, and was one of the originators of Reader-Response Criticism.

Seabrook, Andrea and Alex Chadwick. "Wikipedia Bans Access from Capitol Hill Computers." *Day to Day*. National Public Radio, 1 Feb 2006. Web. 1 Mar. 2010.

Andrea Seabrook is a Congressional reporter for NPR. Alex Chadwick is the host of NPR's news and information program, *Day to Day*.

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**Hard & Soft Sources:** Avoid obviously weak and/or unreliable sources such as *National Enquirer*, *The White Supremacist Newsletter*, or *People Magazine*. So-called "soft" sources are not written at a collegiate level of sophistication and complexity.

Examples of *Soft* Sources:

An article on women's health published in *Seventeen* magazine.  
An article on global warming published in the *Times Herald* or *USA Today*.  
An undergrad's paper on Jonathan Swift available online.

Examples of *Hard* Sources:

An article on Neanderthals published in *Scientific American* or *Smithsonian*.  
Lecture notes from a college or university professor.  
An article on this year's election published in the *Washington Post*.

Q. What if our library doesn't have a work I need?

A. Interlibrary loan can get books and articles for you, but you must act early!

Q. Do I have to have my topic perfectly defined right now?

A. Not at all. The very process of doing research will help you redefine what the true goal of your paper is to be. Keep an open mind and keep considering new ideas.